

# DEAR FRIENDS,

Nearly every law in Indiana is on the books because a citizen recognized a need and shared that need with their legislator. The process of making laws, from committee hearings to first, second and third bill readings, can be confusing.

This guide to the Indiana General Assembly provides basic information about the legislative process in Indiana, as well as information on how to contact your state legislators.

As your Senators, we represent you at the Statehouse and value your opinions. Each year, as hundreds of issues come before the General Assembly for consideration, we encourage you to contact our offices with your thoughts and concerns. Perhaps you may have a suggestion for a law that will make a difference in the lives of Hoosiers.

We hope you will find this guide helpful, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Indiana Senate Republicans

# LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

- Legislature convenes in mid-November for Organization Day.
- Legislature reconvenes for a long or short legislative session in early January.
- Long legislative sessions must adjourn by April 29.
- Short legislative sessions must adjourn by March 14.
- Special sessions may be called by the governor.
- Between sessions, legislators participate in interim study committees where they develop legislative proposals for the following year.

# TYPES OF LEGISLATION

## Senate Bill/House Bill:

- Proposed Indiana law changes are introduced as Senate or House bills.
- Legislators may introduce as many bills as they wish during the pre-filing period, however, they are limited on the number after that.

## Senate Joint /House Joint Resolution:

- Proposed amendments to Indiana's Constitution are introduced as joint resolutions.
- A joint resolution must be adopted by two separately elected general assemblies and approved by a majority of Hoosier voters during a statewide general election before the state Constitution can be changed.

## Senate and House Concurrent Resolution:

- Concurrent resolutions address matters of general concern to the Legislature; they deal with subjects as diverse as urging Congress to enact legislation or honoring individuals.

# CONTACTING LEGISLATORS

## The Indiana Senate:

200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

1-800-382-9476 or 317-232-9400

For those with hearing or speech impairments, contact the Senate by TDD at 1-800-548-9517.

## The Indiana House of

## Representatives:

200 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

1-800-382-9841 (Republican caucus)

1-800-382-9842 (Democrat caucus)

## For more information:

To find out the status of a particular piece of legislation during the legislative session, call the Legislative Information Center at 317-232-9856 or visit [www.in.gov/legislative](http://www.in.gov/legislative)

Easy-to-use computer terminals are available to the public at the center in Room 230 of the Statehouse. The terminals are linked to a bill tracking system and calendars listing bills scheduled for committee hearings and floor action. At the center, copies of bills are available for 15 cents per page.

# THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# HOW A BILL BECOMES AN INDIANA LAW

## Idea Developed

A constituent, interest group, public official or the governor suggests a bill to a legislator.

The legislator then sponsor's the bill. Lawmakers in the same house may join as co-sponsors of the bill.

## Bill Drafted

At the legislator's direction, the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency provides research and drafting assistance and prepares the bill in proper technical form.

## Bill Introduced

After a bill is drafted and filed by a legislator in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, the bill is then read by title for the first time to the legislative body.

## Committee Reference

The Senate President Pro Tem or the Speaker of the House of Representatives refers the bill to a committee for review.

## Third Reading

On the third reading, the bill is eligible for passage in its house of origin.

The bill cannot be amended unless two-thirds of the legislators agree to changes. Otherwise, it passes or fails without changes.

## Second Reading

After committee approval, the bill is printed and legislators have at least two days to review it.

A bill may be amended by a majority vote of legislators.

## Committee Action

Committee chairmen schedule bill hearings that are open to the public, where anyone may ask to speak on a bill.

Because of the high volume of bills and time constraints, not every bill receives a hearing.

## Vote

The bill passes when approved by a majority of members. In the Senate, 26 is the majority. In the House of Representatives, 51 is the majority.

## Second House

The bill goes through the same process as above in the second house.

If the bill is amended, the first house must approve the changes before the bill may be sent to the governor.

## Conference Committee

If the house of origin disagrees with amendments, the bill goes to a four-member bi-partisan conference committee.

If an agreement is reached, both chambers must approve the bill before sending it to the governor.

## Governor

Upon receiving a bill, the governor may sign it, veto it, or let it become law without his signature.

Vetoed bills may still become law if the veto is overridden by a majority vote in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.